

Dear Robert:

Thank you for the conversation we had on the phone just now. Below you will find a first draft of a letter we plan to send out to our members and Iranian-American webpages. We would appreciate if you gave comments on what else could be included in or excluded from the letter. The rhetorical tone in the letter may be somewhat harsh, but as I mentioned, this is only the first draft. (Do also note that the ending is not finished).

We are mostly interested in comments regarding the amendment itself, and perhaps arguments you wish to emphasize.

We would also appreciate if we could continue this communication so that we can adapt our activities to the developments in Congress.

At this stage, we believe that a fax/telephone/letter/email campaign will be more effective than a petition. But if you believe that a petition would be useful, we can launch one over the net. The problem with the petitions is that once people sign them, they usually do not bother to call or send faxes to Congress. The petition signing is simply too comfortable of an alternative.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any comments or questions. You can also visit www.iic.org to find out more about Iranians for International Cooperation.

Best regards,
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Include Iran on FY 2001 Agriculture Appropriations Bill!

Representative George R. Nethercutt (R-WA) has offered an amendment to the FY 2001 Agriculture Appropriations Bill that will lift unilateral U.S. sanctions on food and medicine to all nations including Iran.

This is a very positive step towards normalizing relations between the US and Iran and breaking Iran out of its economic isolation and hardship. The Iranian people are the primary victims of Iran's economic isolation and U.S. farmers are the primary victims of the U.S.'s sanctions policies.

There are, however, influential groups that are pressuring Congress to exclude Iran from the amendment. If they would succeed, sanctions against the dictatorships in Iraq and North Korea would be lifted, whereas sanctions on an increasingly democratic Iran would remain in place.

These influential lobby groups have based their opposition to Iran on the arrest of 13 Iranian Jews charged with spying. As long as these 13 Iranian Jews are accused of spying, the sanctions should not be lifted, they argue.

It is widely acknowledged that anti-democratic forces in Iran have orchestrated the arrest of these 13 Iranians in order to derail attempts to improve relations between Iran and the U.S. Opponents of President Khatami's reforms are terrified of losing their privileged position in Iran, a scenario that most likely would occur if a warm-up in ties between Iran and the U.S. took place.

Not including Iran in the Nethercut bill is exactly what hardliners in Iran want and they are using the 13 Iranian Jews as puppets to obtain that goal. At the same time, opponents of a rapprochement with Iran on the U.S. side are using the very same 13 Iranian Jews as puppets, to obtain the very same goal.

You can make a difference.

Call your Congressman today and let him or her know that as a constituent, you want your representative to support the Nethercutt amendment and Iran's inclusion in it.